REMARKS

Claims 1-41 remain in this application, with Claims 1, 10, 13, 22, and 33 amended. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and review of the application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

The Examiner rejected Claims 13 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that applicant regards as the invention. Applicant disagrees, and considers the claims to be sufficiently definite as originally presented. Nevertheless, in the interest of advancing this application to allowance, Applicant has opted to amend the claims and delete the particular limitation deemed indefinite.

Before addressing the merits of the rejections based on prior art, Applicant provides the following brief description of the invention. The present invention provides a form processing system and method for providing populated-form data to a reception device by populating unpopulated-form data with previously stored field data. The invention permits a plurality of users (i.e., reception devices) to access the stored field data in the population of forms. In one exemplary embodiment, the form processing system may be used by several different parties associated with a workers' compensation claim, the parties including attorneys, doctors and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Any of the parties may access the form processing system to populate forms accessible through the system. The information they supply to populate the forms would then be stored by the system, and would be accessible to other parties that access the same system to populate other forms. For example, an attorney handling the workers' compensation claim might use the system to fill out a first form including fields for the injured worker's name, address, employer, etc. Later, a doctor treating the worker might use the system to fill out another form. This time, the data fields previously supplied by the attorney would by populated automatically by the system, thereby relieving the doctor of the burden of re-entering this information. As a

result, the process of generating the myriad of forms is made simpler for all parties associated with the claim.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the form processing system includes a database, a processing application, and a server adapted to communicate with a plurality of reception devices, through a wide area network, such as the Internet. The processing application is adapted to receive form-request data from a first reception device, where the form-request data corresponds to a first unpopulated-form data (where the unpopulated-form data is preferable in a portable document format (PDF)). In order to simplify this form selection process, the form-request data may further include a first form-request data and a second form-request data, where the first form-request data corresponds to an unpopulated-form type (e.g., legal forms, medical forms, etc.) and the second form-request data corresponds to the first unpopulated-form data (i.e., the specific unpopulated-form document).

The processing application is further adapted to receive form-request data and field-identification data from a second reception device, where the form-request data corresponds to a second unpopulated-form data (i.e., the specific unpopulated-form document), and the field-identification data corresponds to one of the previously stored field data (e.g., the injured workers name or the claim/case number). Based upon this data (i.e., the form-request data and the field-identification data), the processing application will then populate the fields within the second unpopulated-form data with the previously stored field data linked to the field data corresponding to the field-identification data.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 5-10, 13, 15, 17-18, 22-24, 26-31, 33, 35, and 37-38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Hitchcock et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Hitchcock discloses a forms engine that allows data sharing between customizable on-line forms. More specifically, the forms engine enables a user to complete an on-line application, such as a college admission application for a particular

institution. The forms engine saves the data into a database and automatically populates corresponding fields in other application forms for other institutions. This way, the user can fill in a single application form rather than multiple application forms, and each institution can receive their own particular form populated with the user's data rather than being bound to a common form for all institutions.

There are significant differences between Hitchcock and the present invention. In Hitchcock, the user is the only one entering data into the system and the institutions are recipients of the populated forms containing the data entered by the user. Unlike the present invention, the institutions cannot generate a separate on-line form for communication to another institution or to the user. Moreover, the institutions cannot enter data into an on-line form and have that data populated into that form along with previous data provided by the user. In this regard, the flow of information in Hitchcock is unidirectional, i.e., from the user to the forms engine to the institutions. By contrast, the flow of information in the present invention is multidirectional, i.e., any user connected to the system can populate a form using newly entered as well as previously entered information and send that populated form to any other user. The present invention thereby provides significantly greater flexibility and capability than Hitchcock.

More specifically, Hitchcock fails to suggest or disclose, *inter alia*, any of the following aspects of the processing application of Claim 1:

receive form-request data from a second one of said plurality of reception devices, said form-request data corresponding to a second unpopulated-form data;

provide said second unpopulated-form data to said second one of said plurality of reception devices;

receive at least one field data from said second one of said plurality of reception devices, said at least one field data corresponding to at least one field within said second unpopulated-form data;

generate a second populated-form data by populating at least one field within said second unpopulated-form data with said at least one field data from said first one of said plurality of reception devices and at least one additional field within said second unpopulated-form data with said at least one field data from said second one of said plurality of reception devices; and

provide said second populated-form data to at least one of said plurality of reception devices, wherein said at least one of said plurality of reception devices is selected from a group of reception devices consisting of said first one of said plurality of reception devices, said second one of said plurality of reception devices and any other one of said plurality of reception devices.

Likewise, with respect to Claim 22, Hitchcock fails to suggest or disclose the corresponding method steps. The rejections of these claims, and all claims dependent thereon, should therefore be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claims 4, 19-21, 25, and 39-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitchcock et al. in view of Turpin. The Examiner also rejected Claims 11, 14, 32 and 34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitchcock et al. in view of Bunnell. The Examiner also rejected Claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitchcock et al. in view of McCormick. The Examiner also rejected Claims 16 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitchcock et al. in view of Good. Each of these grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed for the same reasons set forth above.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-41 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested, and a timely Notice of Allowability is solicited. To the extent it would be helpful to placing this application in condition for allowance, the Applicant encourages the Examiner to contact the undersigned counsel and conduct a telephonic

interview.

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions the Commissioner for a one-month extension of time, extending to February 16, 2005, the period for response to the Office Action dated August 16, 2004. The Commissioner is authorized to charge $510.00 for the three-month extension fee in accordance with Rule 1.17(a)(3), and any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-0639.

Respectfully submitted,

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